

The RIGHTS of MAN,

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BY T. SPENCE.

Tune, "*The Babes in the Wood.*"

ALL you who wonder at the Times
That they so hard do grow,
Come hither, listen unto me,
And you the Cause shall know.

O Muses, your Assistance lend,
While such Things I rehearse,
As neither Goose nor Eagle's Wing
E'er wrote in Prose or Verse.

Man nothing less than Lord was made,
For nothing less was meant;
That all Things else he should subdue
He to the World was sent.

But not content with this large Sway
Their Brethren Men subdue;
And all the Godlike Race is made
Subservient to a Few.

O Earth and Heaven and all therein
Your Wonder high express,
That rational Beings like *dumb Brutes*,
Ought earthly should depress!

Yet so it is that worse than they,
Nought nat'ral they can claim,
Nor Hip, nor Haw, nor Nut, nor Sloe,
Nor ought that you can name.

If Grass or Nettles they could eat
The same would be deny'd;
For my Lord's Land and Herbage reach
Close to the Highway Side.

'A Hare or Partridge they may dress,
They're Nature's common gift;
My Lord's Ground fed them, why should he
Of his RIGHTS be bereft?

'To fish then you will them allow;
The River's not my Lord's.
Do not mistake, *the Water's his*,
And all that it affords.

To fish or hunt they have no Right,
Since they no Land can claim;
Whatever lives be it great or small,
The Land supports the same.

So they must work to other Men
Whether they will or no;
For idle up and down the World
No Landlefs Men must go.

For why, in Truth, they cannot live
On Air or the Highway;
Trespas they must then on the Grass,
If suffer'd thus to stray.

And yet no Laws are made that so,
The Rich them Work may give;
But when they've serv'd their Turn on them
They care not *how* they live.

So worse than Horse or Oxen thus
Is their unhappy Lot;
For Horse and Oxen they maintain,
Whether they work or not.

Their Wages too by Law they stint,
As Men, their Labour too,
Should have no Right, as best they can,
To sell to that *Vile Crew*.

But not so with their ill got Lands
Do they themselves confine,
As much as they can get's the Rule
By which they let the same.

Like Tygers lurking for their Prey
So on the Watch they keep,
Lest Tenants they by any Means
Their Labours' Fruits should reap.

If only Sixpence more they think
The Tenant he can pay,
As soon as e'er his Lease is out
The same on him they lay.

Like hungry *Hawks* the Farmers then
Are forc'd with Hearts full sore,
The Poor at Market hard to gripe,
To stop the Landlord's Roar.

If backwards in their Rents they run
Indulgence they find small,
Their Lord does like a rav'ning Wolf,
On Goods and Cattle fall.

The Landlords what they thus have reav'd
In other Lands do spend;
And while we've Landlords Things will worse,
But never once will mend.

O! there's a Land, as I hear say,
Where Landlords none there be!
O! Heavens! might I that happy Land
Before I die but see.

The Rents throughout that happy State
Each Parish deals so fair,
That every Householder therein
Does get an EQUAL SHARE.*

Of equal Shares of Land or Goods
They never once do dream;
But in each Parish, *part the Rents*:
Which better far they deem.

As all the World belongs to all,
So does a Land to those
That dwell therein, the Likeness then
Down to a Parish goes.

So by this simple RULE OF RIGHT,
All Things in Order move,
In Church and State 'mongst Rich and Poor
All's Harmony and Love.

For as the Poor their nat'ral Rights,
And Lordships thus enjoy,
The Rich unenvy'd live in Peace,
None wish them to annoy.

Then Lord have Mercy on all Lands,
This happy Change soon bring,
That, Brethren-like, Men may divide
Their Rents, and gladly sing.

So if by Sicknes or Mischance
To Poverty some wane,
Their Dividend of Rents will come
To set them up again.

Ye *Priests* and *Lawyers*, who Men's RIGHTS
Gloss o'er deceitfully,
Our Common Claim to Rents will stand
'Gainst all your Sophistry.

* The Meaning of this is, That after the whole Amount of the Rents are collected in a Parish from every Person, according to the full Value of the Premises which they occupy, so much per Pound, according to Act of Parliament, ought to be set apart for Support of the State instead of all Taxes; that another Sum should next be deducted for Support of the Parish Establishment, instead of Tolls, Tythes, Rates, Cesses, &c. &c. &c. after which the Remainder belongs equally to all the settled Inhabitants, whether Rich or Poor, and ought to be divided equally among them.

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